

REMARKS

This Amendment is in response to the outstanding Official Action mailed June 10, 2008. A petition requesting a two-month extension of time is enclosed herewith, whereby the new deadline for response is extended to, and includes, November 10, 2008.

Claims 1-12 and 14-19 are currently pending in this application, of which claims 1 and 12 are independent claims, and claim 13 has been cancelled. It is respectfully submitted that the following remarks bring the application in condition for allowance. Consideration and entry is respectfully requested.

As an initial matter, please find enclosed a replacement sheet for FIGS. 4 and 5, including English translations. Applicant respectfully submits that English translations were already submitted, but nonetheless, translations are provided here.

Claim 13 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter of the invention. Specifically, Examiner does not believe there is sufficient disclosure in the specification to support the phrase, "means for purging the injection means."

Applicant hereby cancels claim 13 from the application, and respectfully requests that this rejection be withdrawn.

§102(b) and §103(a) Rejections

The Examiner rejected claims 1, 3-7, 9-11 and 14-18 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by, or in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as obvious over, U.S. Patent No. 5,972,263 (Goodman).

Goodman discloses a process of slip casting, whereby the capillary pressure exerted by the pores of the mould removes

excess water, originally found in the slip composition. The composition of the slip of Goodman is modified prior to casting through the use of specific ions, which is then cast in this modified state.

It is respectfully submitted that Goodman does not disclose each and every element of the claimed invention, as is required under either §102(b) or §103(a).

Specifically, Goodman does not disclose "casting a slip under pressure," nor does it disclose the method of casting a slip to form a deposit, followed by filtering a solution, containing a deflocculent, through the deposit.

Goodman merely discloses the use of capillary forces to remove water, which was part of the slip suspension, from the slip using the capillary action of the mould. See Col. 1, lines 22-41. The claimed invention, on the other hand, pressurizes a solution, containing deflocculent, which is passed through the slip deposit, such that the solution is filtered by passage through the deposit. This is a fundamental difference between the filtration process of the claimed invention and the "filtration" process in Goodman, as asserted by Examiner.

Furthermore, it is respectfully submitted that in Goodman, the slip contains the deflocculents, and that Goodman is silent as to a separate solution, which may be added to the slip, already cast into a deposit. The claimed invention, however, involves a suspension, or slip, and a separate solution, which is brought into the mold once the slip has already been cast into a deposit. Goodman represents a disclosure of traditional slip casting.

Finally, Goodman discloses a slip suspension that is modified prior to casting using specific ions. The claimed invention does not include this step.

As such, Goodman does not disclose the claimed invention in claim 1, and it is respectfully requested that the rejection be withdrawn.

Claims 3-7, 9-11 and 14-18, dependent upon claim 1, are also not disclosed by Goodman, by virtue of they're dependence on claim 1.

Next, Examiner rejected claims 2-7, 9-11 and 14-18 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by, or in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as obvious over, Goodman as evidenced by Applicant's Specification (Page 3, lines 22-24).

Goodman discloses the use of a slip mixture including a clay mixture. Applicant's Specification (Page 3, lines 22-24) discloses that, traditionally, clay mixtures may be flocculated, though with much difficulty, and that clay mixtures are typically not used with pressurized molding.

For the above reasons, independent claim 1 is not unpatentable over Goodman. Claims 2-7, 9-11 and 14-18, depending from independent claim 1 is not unpatentable, inter alia, by virtue of their dependence from claim 1.

Examiner also rejected claims 12-13 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Canada Patent No. 2,124,863 (Marple et al.).

Marple et al. disclose the use of two slips that are mixed prior to conventional slip casting. Marple et al. appears to be silent as to pressure casting, and appears to use an open circuit in the process.

Applicant respectfully submits that there is an inherent difference between a suspension and a solution. A suspension, such as a slip, consists of particles in a fluid, where the particles are not soluble in the fluid but are instead suspended in the fluid. A solution consists of soluble species dissolved in a fluid.

Marple et al. only disclose suspensions, and specifically the use of two slip mixtures, which combine, enter the mold simultaneously, and undergo a traditional molding process. Marple et al. is silent as to the use of a solution.

Conversely, the claimed invention includes the single slip suspension, which is not mixed or modified prior to slip casting, and once it is cast, a solution is passed through it. Moreover, the slip suspension and solution, from the first and second tanks, are injected into the mold in alternative steps, and are not injected into the mold simultaneously. Also, the injections of the two materials occur under pressure.

Marple et al. do not disclose each and every element of claim 12, as required. Applicant respectfully requests this rejection be withdrawn.

Examiner rejected claims 8 and 19 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Goodman as applied to claims 1, 3-7, 9-11 and 14-18, above.

For the above reasons, independent claim 1 is not unpatentable over Goodman. Claims 8 and 19, depending from independent claim 1 is not unpatentable, inter alia, by virtue of their dependence from claim 1.

Finally, Examiner rejected claims 8 and 19 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Goodman as evidenced by Applicant's Specification as applied to claims 2-7, 9-11 and 14-18 above.

For the above reasons, independent claim 1 is not unpatentable over Goodman as evidenced by Applicant's Specification. Claims 8 and 19, depending from independent claim 1 is not unpatentable, inter alia, by virtue of their dependence from claim 1.

As it is believed that all of the rejections set forth in the Official Action have been fully met, favorable reconsideration and allowance are earnestly solicited.

If, however, for any reason the Examiner does not believe that such action can be taken at this time, it is respectfully requested that he telephone Applicants attorney at (908) 654-5000 in order to overcome any additional objections which he might have.

If there are any additional charges in connection with this requested amendment, the Examiner is authorized to charge Deposit Account No. 12-1095 therefor.

Dated: November 6, 2008

Respectfully submitted,

By 

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